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Superintendent

December 1, 2008

To: ESEA Title I, Part A Authorized Representatives

From: BJ Granbery, Title I, Part A Director/Division Administrator  
Division of Educational Opportunity and Equity

Subject: Notifications to Parents on Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) Status as required by  
the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

As you know, the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) has just released the Montana NCLB HQT Data Collection Manual for the 2008-09 School Year. Data must be collected and returned to the OPI by January 20, 2009. Once determinations of HQT status have been completed, districts receiving Title I, Part A funds must notify parents of students attending schools that receive Title I, Part A funds if the parent's child has been assigned to or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by any teacher that does not meet the federal HQT requirements. This requirement is found in Section 1111(h)(6)(B) of Title I, Part A of NCLB.

A sample letter that may be used for this required notification is enclosed and posted on the OPI Web site on the Title I, Part A Improving Basic Programs page. These letters must be sent as soon as the district completes the HQT determinations for the OPI data collection, but no later than the end of January 2009 (essentially notifying parents at the start of the second semester this year). The OPI Title I staff will be monitoring for district compliance this requirement later this school year and in future school years as part of our overall Title I monitoring.

We'd also like to take this opportunity to remind you of the other provisions related to HQT for districts and schools receiving Title I, Part A funds.

Section 1111(h)(6)(A) - At the beginning of each school year (beginning of second semester 2009 if not already done) districts receiving Title I, Part A funds must notify parents of students attending schools that receive Title I, Part A funds that parents MAY REQUEST, and the district will provide in a timely manner, IF REQUESTED, the following information (at a minimum) regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers:

- 1) Whether the teacher has met state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;

*"It is the mission of the Office of Public Instruction to improve teaching and learning through communication, collaboration, advocacy, and accountability to those we serve."*

- 2) Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived;
- 3) The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certificate or degree; and/or
- 4) Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

A sample letter for this purpose is also enclosed and also posted on the OPI Web site on the Title I, Part A Improving Basic Programs page.

Section 1119(i) – The district must require the principal of each school that receives Title I, Part A funds to attest annually in writing as to whether such school is in compliance with all requirements regarding highly qualified teachers and requirements for the qualifications and duties of paraprofessionals. Copies of the attestations must be maintained at each school that receives Title I, Part A funds and at the district main office and must be available to any member of the general public on request.

Thank you for your attention to these federal requirements for districts and schools receiving Title I, Part A funds.

Encs.